



FIERY NEW DRAGONS AT THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY REGATTA

Two new additions to the New Zealand Dragon fleet, USA 304 Yankee Doodle Dandee owned by Scott Palmer and NZL15 Alla skippered by Alex Kirichuk produced fiery competition at the New Zealand International Dragon Association Regatta at Mahurangi last weekend.

Set in the idyllic waters off Scotts Landing in the outer Mahurangi Harbour, the Dragons competed in eight windward-leeward races over 3 days in light to medium airs of 8-12 knots.

Returning from a creditable performance in the Australian Prince Philip Cup earlier in the year, Scott Palmer sailed an impeccable Regatta in Yankee Doodle Dandee with an extremely experienced crew (including past Olympian, Fraser Beer, with Philip Allen as forehead crew) taking a convincing 1st place overall and being awarded the Johan Anker Trophy.

Past National Champions, John Webber and Frans de Court teamed up on Matuku with Sam de Court to take second place, followed closely by Alex Kirichuk in Alla with Kevin Dibley and Simon Kidd.

In awarding Alla the Brown & Stone Trophy for best performing classic Dragon, President Frans de Court said, "All members of the Association admire the enthusiasm and courage Alex Kirichuk has shown in creating such an exquisite Dragon - from the mahogany hull built by the Royal Lagoon shipyard in the Ukraine to the advanced technical expertise of the New Zealand rigging and sail making industries."



Not only was this Regatta memorable for on the water competition and beautiful weather, but the Regatta base at Scotts Landing provided a perfect backdrop to the social functions each evening.

Fifty guests celebrated the 80th Anniversary of the Dragon Class at a commemorative dinner on the Saturday night with dragon sailors past and present. Special guests included senior members of the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron and family members of Don St Clair Brown and Allen Smith, instrumental at various critical stages in the foundation and promotion of the Class since it was first introduced to New Zealand in the 1960s.

John St Clair Brown of Waiwera Water sponsored the Regatta and congratulated the National Secretary, Jude Hooson, on the organization of the event. "What you have created here this weekend reminds me of the spirit and collegiality that existed when my father was involved in establishing the Class in New Zealand with Bob Stone, Bob Stewart and Laurie Davidson. The sailing was always very competitive on the water but there was also great camaraderie on shore."

Balancing water with fire – another sponsor of the event was Corinthian Vodka by Alex Kirichuk who had prepared special vintage vodka to commemorate the 80th Anniversary.

The Smith family, represented by Patricia and Stephen Smith, presented photographs and historical articles collected by Allen for a special viewing on the night and to be collated into a historical narrative of the Dragon Class in New Zealand.

In accepting the Johan Anker Trophy at the prize giving on Sunday night, Scott Palmer said "This Regatta has brought together generations of Dragon sailors, newcomers to the Class and those who have had the pleasure of sailing them for some years. What we sailors all appreciate is the challenge of one class racing – and there is no question that the Dragon represents the best of that."



With the World Championships in Melbourne in 2011, the New Zealand International Dragon Association has seen this Regatta as a platform to build a fleet of Dragons ready to represent New Zealand and has its eyes firmly set on this task.

BACKGROUND

The Dragon was originally designed by Norwegian Johan Anker in 1929 but has steadily evolved with contemporary technologies resulting in the Dragon becoming one of the largest one design sailing fleets in the world.

Over 1400 Dragons are now sailed in 30 countries by an international class of sailors from Olympic medalists to America's Cup sailors (including Russell Coutts) and European Royalty who enjoy the competitiveness of one class racing.

www.dragonclass.org.nz

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY AVAILABLE AT:

www.oceanphotography.co.nz

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